

SYNOPSIS

CANADA: 1985 – 50c Parliament Booklet Usages

A. PURPOSE

In this author's opinion, there is not enough modern postal history on display at philatelic exhibitions. This is an attempt to arouse interest in a modern postal history subject. In 1985 Canadian stamp booklets with Parliament designs were sold at 50c in mechanical vending machines. Each booklet had one 34c stamp, the extant first-class postage rate, and 5 other low denomination stamps adding up to 16c. Mailers had to use ingenuity to get their money's worth using up the 2 x 5c and 3 x 2c stamps. This one-frame exhibit will answer the question "how did Canada Post customers use those booklet stamps, especially the low values?"

B. CHALLENGE

Because these are relatively modern stamps, plentiful (almost 13 million booklets were produced) and of minimal catalogue value, postal history dealers do not specially carry covers with this issue, except by serendipity. Furthermore, many such covers were discarded as there was a perceived lack of interest in a bunch of 5c and 2c stamps. As a result, these covers are not easy to come by in any quantity. Furthermore, overseas letters and ancillary services such as registration and special delivery franked with these booklet stamps are extremely tough to find. These 16 pages of covers are the result of more than 10 years of searching.

C. MATERIAL

The material shown consists of one exploded booklet showing the positions of the stamps, and an example of a cover franked with the low values on page 1. A variety of commercial covers is shown on pages 2 - 16. While the booklets and stamps themselves have been researched to an extent by Kasimir Bileski, to this author's knowledge their postal history has not previously been studied or exhibited.

D. ORGANIZATION

After the introduction, the exhibit shows covers in ascending order of rates reflecting postal rate increases or higher weight steps. It then presents examples of overseas letters, registration, special delivery, underpaid & overpaid mail and finally mixed usage with later Parliament booklet stamps.

E. HIGHLIGHTS

- Numerous se-tenant frankings including a 36c rate on page 4 and a 39c rate on page 6.
- Several intact complete booklet panes used as part of the franking for higher rates.
- A unique franking for a \$4.05 domestic registered cover using exclusively these booklet stamps on page 11.
- A postage due cover underpaid by 1c on page 14. This is the only underpaid "caught" cover with this issue seen by the author.

F. SOURCES

- Postal Rates and Fees of the Elizabethan Era in Canada 1952 – 2002, Volume One, Part One, by Andrew Ching, Harry W.E. Machum, Roger F. Narbonne, 2004
- Parliament Buildings 50c Booklet, Information sheets, by Kasimir Bileski, undated